Mr. Javed Ahmad Ghamidi vs. Ali Sina Part 18

Javed Ahmad Ghamidi and Khalid Zaheer vs. Ali Sina

Part XII

from khalid zaheer

date Jan 30, 2007

Dear Readers:

I and Mr Ali Sina have agreed on a few things. We've agreed that unlike what was happening before, each message from our side is going to be posted in an unbroken form immediately after it has been received, even if the next response is posted within a span of a few hours of that posting. I believe that it is unfair that a message should be broken by a participant into different passages with each passage being followed by the other participant's rebuttal. However, I take Mr Ali's words that he didn't do it with the purpose of distorting the quality of my messages in the eyes of the readers. I am accepting his explanation because my religion demands that I do so.

Each message from now on is going to talk about one subject only. It's not going to be of more than one thousand words. A deviation of two hundred words would be tolerated although not appreciated. Each message will have to appear within a week of the message received from the other participant in the debate. I requested but Mr Ali didn't agree that Mr Ghamidi's name be removed from the list of participants in the debate. I have agreed to his suggestion but would want to clarify that the quickness of responses demanded by the new rules would sometimes mean that I will be posting my replies without consulting him. I hope that by following these rules, our discussion is going to be more fair and useful.

I am starting this new series of exchanges with clarification of a simple point. Mr Ali has asked me to start this series by mentioning any one miracle of the Qur'an. The following is my response to his demand.

Those who demand that a miracle be shown to them if they were to take the Qur'an seriously are repeating the demands of the disbelievers at the time when the Qur'an was being revealed. The Qur'an insisted then, and therefore it does even now, that those who will believe in the book of God are the ones who have cared to preserve their God-given nature and who use their intellect properly. The book clarifies that no amount of miracles would ever convince a person to believe who is otherwise not inclined, because he doesn't deserve, to believe. As for those who deserve to believe, they don't need any miracles. Their purity of nature and clarity of thinking would lead them to believe.

The phenomenon of acquiring belief should not be confused with blind-following of a creed by a population which teaches it to its new generation and the process goes on apparently mindlessly. According to the Qur'an, you move from the darkness of unfaith to the light of faith gradually. Although the journey of faith involves intellectual reasoning, it is a primarily a test of character. You need to keep reflecting, reading, enquiring, and forming opinions in response to a claim that a certain message is from God. During this process, you are confronted with questions for which you seek answers. To me, a debate like ours is a part of the

process of strengthening of belief. We hear the other side, consider honestly whether they are making a decent point, look at how Islam is responding to the questions raised etc. In the process, at times faith progresses, at times it stays stationary, and at times it weakens. Questions gather in mind and we continue to grapple with them. In other words belief -– the confidence that there is a God, that He has sent His messengers, and that He will cause the Day of Judgment to occur – is not a state of mind that is either inherited or is caused to happen overnight. It is a hard-earned feeling which continues to alter in its strength exactly in accordance with the quality of an individual's performance, both moral and intellectual.

Faith progresses when we perform well in the moral domain of our life. When we speak the truth, help others in their needs, struggle to uphold all the good things in life, including the laws given to us by the Almighty, and do all this to please God and earn a reward in the Hereafter, we are progressing in faith.

Had there been a magical wand that would have caused people to see that what was being claimed to be from God was right, it wouldn't have been a test of anything but eyesight. Acquiring faith, on the contrary, is a test of real character. You have to listen to everyone carefully; you need to sift what is correct from what is not; you have to remain focused on knowing the truth; you cannot afford to be emotional and biased; and you cannot reject a person who claims to be from God simply because you have been condemning him in public with filthiest of words at your disposal. In other words you simply cannot be dishonest in forming opinions and pursuing the truth. How can an extraordinary physical phenomenon ever help in this process?

A final word: When a messenger of God is delivering His message to the people directly, the likelihood that the message is going to be genuinely misunderstood is minimal. When the same message is delivered by people other than the messengers, especially in the later times, like Muslims are doing now, the possibility that many non-Muslims are genuinely disinclined to believe that it is from God is higher. How is God going to deal with such individuals? The Qur'an is absolutely clear that the fate of every individual is going to be decided on the basis of pure merit: Those who delivered the message are going to be questioned on the manner they did it, and those who received it are going to be held accountable on the manner they responded to it. God, the Knower of everything, would then decide about everyone on the basis of pure merit.

Khalid Zaheer

(Words: Excluding this explanation, 1000)

Dr. Zaheer and I had this discussion in private. He suggested putting a limit to the length of the responses. I said that even though space and time are important in a face to face debate, in a written debate we have the luxury to explain our point of view in detail and that the quality of our debate should not be compromised by the length of the responses. Sometimes one paragraph may contain several fallacies that each require several paragraphs to respond to. If the respondent is restricted to give all the evidence, it would appear that he has not enough evidence. This would give a false victory to the one who makes false claims, not because of the strength of his argument but because of technicalities. I don't think we want to mislead our readers and win the argument through technicalities. We are discussing the truth or falsehood of Islam and not our abilities as debaters. Each side should have ample opportunity to explain his point of view exhaustively. Also, I suggested that Dr. Zaheer continue consulting Mr. Ghamidi. He is a scholar of world repute and his insight will help all of us understand Islam better. Dr. Ghamidi has earned his respect not just by me but by all of our readers and we all want to benefit from his erudition.

Furthermore, it seems to me that Dr. Zaheer is under the impression that by presenting the debate in a different format, the readers will come to a different conclusion. I sincerely doubt that but as I promised to him, I will publish his articles first in their entirety and then respond to them section by section, even if this means publishing them twice. I do this in all my debates and urge my opponents to do the same. I do not want to leave anything out. In this way, all the points raised are answered and nothing is left out. As the readers can see a lot of my questions have been left unanswered.

As for miracles, this is the claim made in the Qur'an and by Dr. Zaheer. I am asking him to show us that "brilliant" and "out of this world" evidence that he claims to have found is in the Qur'an. Mr. Ghamidi repeated several times that Muhammad gave "itmam al Hujjat" I want that hujjat. You can't claim that the Qur'an is miraculous and out of this world and then when asked for evidence back off and say that there are no miracles and if you ask for miracles then you don't deserve to believe.

Is there any miracle in the Qur'an or not? If there is, then produce it. If there is none then stop making such claim. Saying you have to have pure heart to understand is not a good answer. Who are you to judge the purity of my heart? I do have a pure heart and I have demonstrated it. My heart aches when I see a woman stoned to death, a Jew is mistreated, innocent people are blown apart by Muslim suicide bombers, and women are subjugated and beaten. It was my purity of heart that made me see Islam is evil. But if by purity of heart you mean credulity and willingness to close my eyes to the evil and absurdity, then I think we have different understandings of this term.

Yes. I am repeating the demand of the disbelievers of the time of Muhammad. I never said I have found something new. These questions are old, as old as Islam. However they have never been answered. Those who asked these questions were silenced with brute force. Now is the time to answer them. Are you able to do that? We are listening. It is you who said the Qur'an is out of this world, miraculous and brilliant. Now show us what you claim. You

say the journey of faith requires intellectual reasoning. Please share that reasoning with us. That is all we are asking. If you had said that your faith is blind, then we had nothing to disagree. However, when you say your faith is logical then you must be able to prove it. If Islam is the only true religion then it must have proof. Otherwise anyone can and in fact does make that claim.

> You need to keep reflecting, reading, enquiring, and forming opinions in response to a claim that a certain message is from God.

That is what I did my respected friend and that is how I found the Qur'an is full of nonsense and I am sharing my findings with my readers. I showed you four of them so far and I can show hundreds. You on the other hand claim to have found something out of this world in this book. Please tell us what you found. If what you found is objective, you can share it logically. If you can't then it is not objective. You chose to believe in the same way people of all faiths and creeds choose to believe in their religions. You and I know that most of those beliefs are false. So tell us what sets Islam apart from the rest. I see Islam is as illogical as other faiths with the difference that Muslims are militant and want to impose their illogical faith on others with violence. I have no problem with illogical beliefs. But I have problem when people want to shove their illogical faiths on me.

In your last response you emphatically stated that Islam is not faith but fact. Here you are saying that the belief in God is "a hard-earned **feeling**." These are two contradictory statements. Facts have nothing to do with feelings. My feelings tell me that the Earth is stationary and the Sun is revolving around it. All my senses confirm this. But this is not the fact. My senses are deceiving me. It would be foolhardy to rely on my senses and my feelings to find the truth. Only logic is the measure of the truth. You say Islam is the only logical faith. Great! Please share that logic with us.

> Faith progresses when we perform well in the moral domain of our life. When we speak the truth, help others in their needs, struggle to uphold all the good things in life, including the laws given to us by the Almighty, and do all this to please God and earn a reward in the Hereafter, we are progressing in faith.

You are not answering the question. Are you insinuating that those who are not Muslims do not perform well in the moral domain or do not help people in need? During the earthquake in Pakistan and the Tsunami, it was the non-Muslim nations who helped most. The Muslim countries' help was shamefully dismal. Statistics show (and if you disagree I can take the time to bring the evidence) that the non-Muslim countries are far more humanitarian that Muslim countries. When in Bam an earthquake killed over 50,000 inhabitants, Israel immediately offered to help and to rescue people trapped under the debris. The Mullahs turned that offer down and let people die an agonizing death. Have you apologized for what your country did to the Bangladeshis in 1971? Please do not lecture

about “moral domain” to us. What moral domain Muslims have? None! Do Muslims help anyone who is not a Muslim? Muslims' charities are earmarked to promote Islam and not to improve the lives of people. There is always a string attached to every help Muslims give to others. If they help the poor it is to enlist their youth in Jihad.

> Had there been a magical wand that would have caused people to see that what was being claimed to be from God was right, it wouldn’t have been a test of anything but eyesight.

My esteemed professor: I am not asking you for a magic wand. You said your belief is all logical. I said, fine, please tell us about it. What is it that Allah wants to test us for? Does he want us to be stupid? Does he reward stupidity and punishes intelligence? You said Islam is fact. I ask you to show us that fact. If you can't then at least please withdraw that claim and be honest about it.

I am not asking you for an extraordinary physical phenomenon. The Meccans asked this and Muhammad said categorically that he can’t perform any miracles, even though he admitted that other prophets prior to him did perform such miracles. He claimed that his miracle is the Qur’an. I read that book and saw no miracle in it but absurdity and violence. You say you converted to Islam because you saw something out of this world in it. So obviously you saw the miracle. Please tell us about it. All I am asking is to tell us what you found in the Qur’an that made you conclude this book is from God. If what you found is logical and objective you should have no problem sharing it with us. Let us say I don’t have pure heart, as you claim. Thousands of others are reading our debate and for sure many of them must have pure hearts. So tell it for them. If my heart is sealed, theirs is not. They will benefit from your insight and their faith will strengthen.

> A final word: When a messenger of God is delivering His message to the people directly, the likelihood that the message is going to be genuinely misunderstood is minimal. When the same message is delivered by people other than the messengers, especially in the later times, like Muslims are doing now, the possibility that many non-Muslims are genuinely disinclined to believe that it is from God is higher.

Is that logical? We can read about the claims of Galileo, Newton , Darwin , Einstein, etc and they make as much, or perhaps even more sense today than when they first postulated them. How is it that the truth of Islam fades with time? Isn’t truth eternal? If Islam was eternal truth, it should make sense all the time to everyone. Only then God could punish those who disbelieve. Since according to your own confession the proof of Islam has evaporated with time, God has no moral ground to punish anyone for disbelieving in something that cannot be proven and sounds illogical. Just because a bunch of illiterate bandits in the 7th century Arabia found Islam true, is not good enough for us to accept it.

Conclusion: I asked you four questions. You responded to three of them and your responses were inadequate. You did not respond to the fourth question. Finally you said that since you have seen something out of this world in the Qur'an, you have accepted that book as the book of God and you have closed your eyes to all its errors and violence. That logic is beyond my comprehension but I agreed with it for the sake of argument. So we decided to change strategy. This time I asked you to show us that undeniable evidence you talk about. Now you don't seem to have any and say I do not deserve believing. Is this response logical or is it ad homiem? Assuming I am not worth believing, what about our readers? Don't you think among them at least there must be someone with pure heart who desperately needs some evidence to believer?

Where shall we go from here? You can't disprove my accusations that the Quran is full of errors and you can't give a single argument to support your claim that this book is out of this world. What shall we talk about now?

PS. I have exceeded the limit of 1000 words that you imposed on me. Do I lose now? Does this mean that Islam is true?